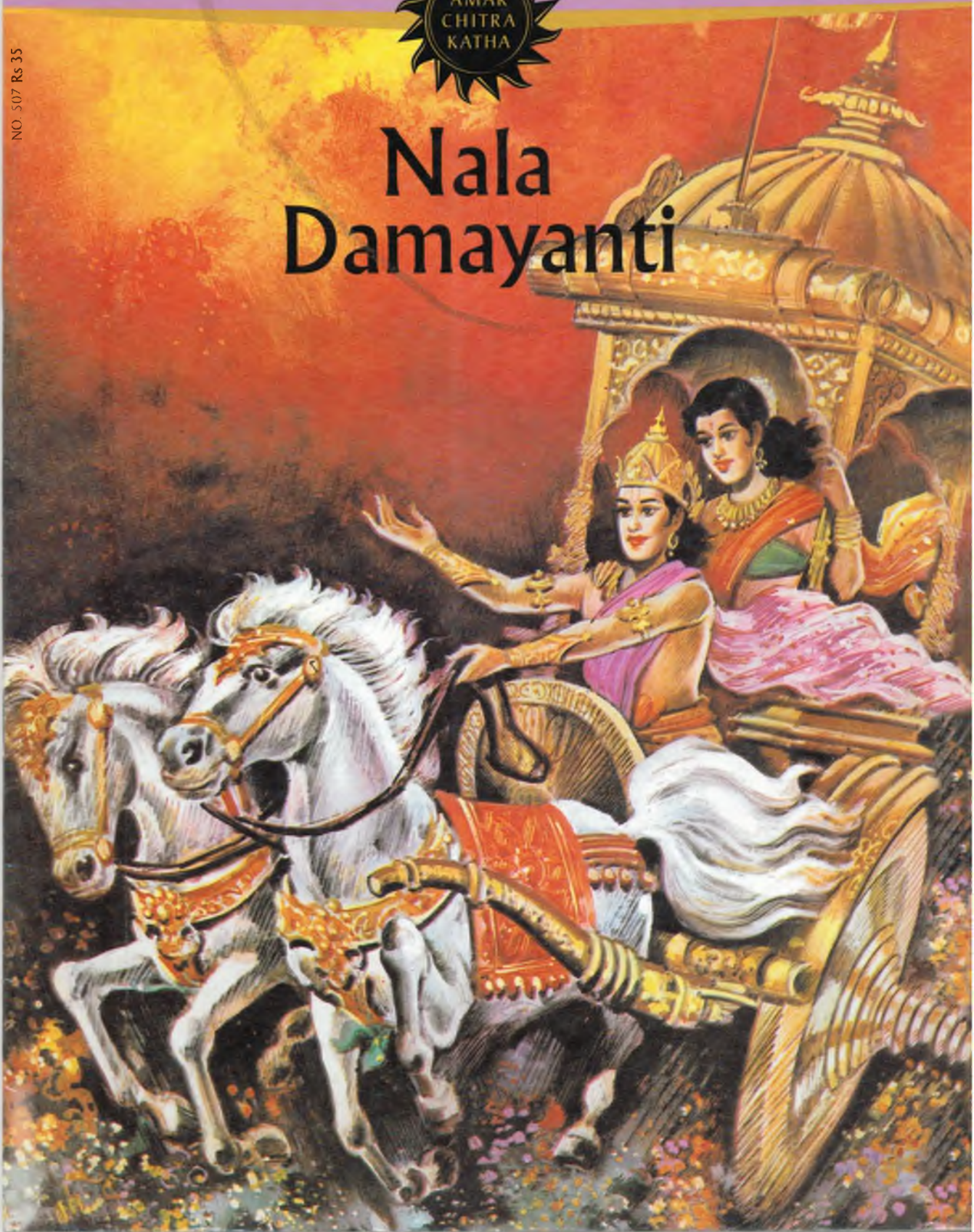




# Nala Damayanti





Illustrated Classics From India

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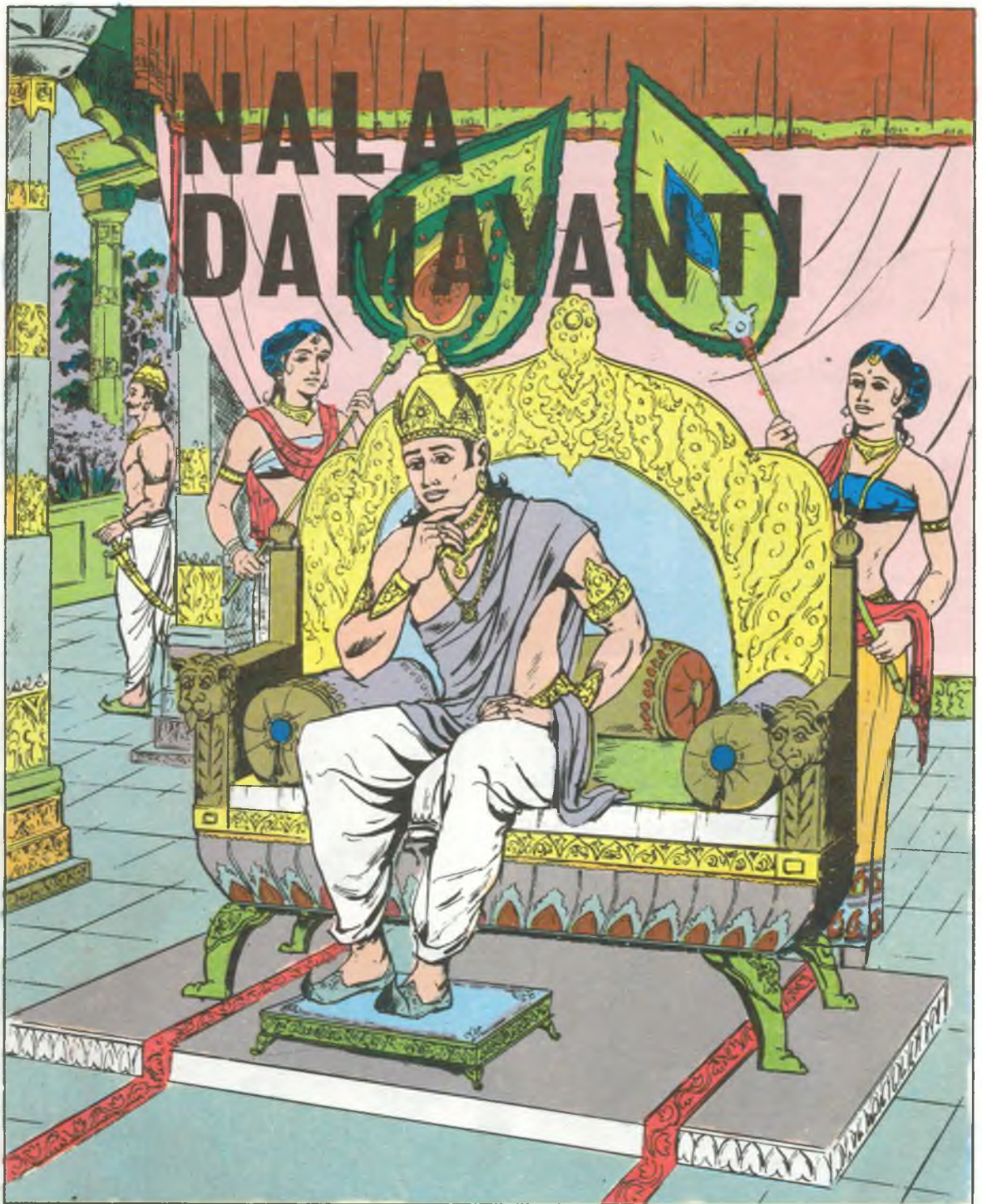


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THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO, NALA RULED OVER THE KINGDOM OF NISHADA. HE WAS GENEROUS AND NOBLE AND WAS LOVED BY HIS SUBJECTS. BUT HE WAS ALWAYS SAD. HIS FATHER HAD GONE TO A FOREST TO SPEND THE LAST YEARS OF HIS LIFE.



NALA'S COUSIN, PUSHKARA, ENVIED HIM HIS FAME.



NALA WAS LONELY AND WANDERED FROM PLACE TO PLACE. ONE DAY—







WHY! THAT  
DAINTY SWAN  
HAS GOLDEN  
PLUMES!

SLOWLY AND SOFTLY HE  
CREPT FORWARD.



HE CAUGHT THE SWAN BY ITS LEG. THE  
BIRD CRIED OUT IN PAIN. THE OTHER  
SWANS LOOKED HELPLESSLY ON.



DON'T BE  
AFRAID.  
I WON'T  
KILL YOU.



I SHALL KEEP  
YOU IN MY  
PALACE AND  
GIVE YOU  
PEARLS.



THE SWAN CONSOLED HIS WAILING  
MATES.



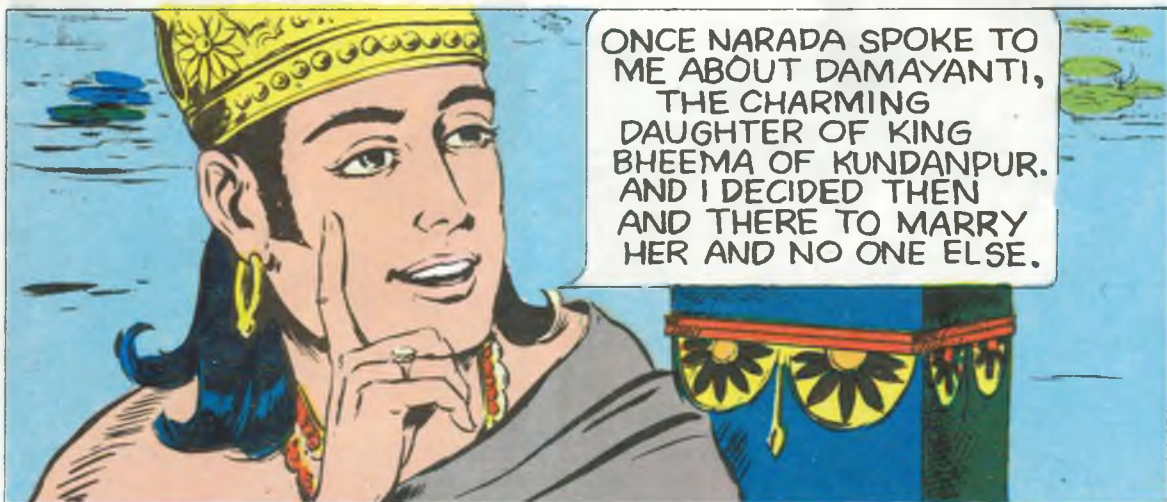
I HAVE TO GO WITH  
THE KING TO KEEP  
A PROMISE I  
MADE IN MY LAST  
BIRTH. I SHALL  
RETURN THE  
MOMENT MY  
WORK IS  
DONE.

NALA BROUGHT  
THE SWAN TO  
HIS PALACE.  
ONE DAY -




WHY ARE  
YOU  
WEEPING,  
O KING?

I HAVE  
BEEN AN  
UNHAPPY  
MAN FOR  
MANY MONTHS.



ONCE NARADA SPOKE TO  
ME ABOUT DAMAYANTI,  
THE CHARMING  
DAUGHTER OF KING  
BHEEMA OF KUNDANPUR.  
AND I DECIDED THEN  
AND THERE TO MARRY  
HER AND NO ONE ELSE.

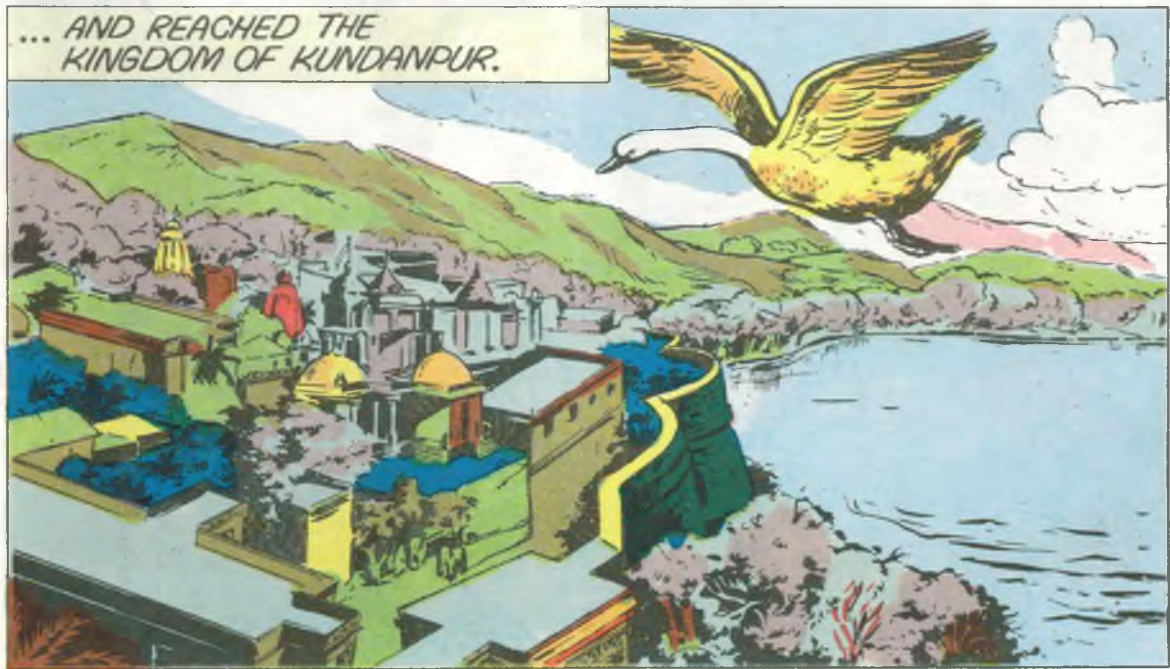




IS THAT ALL THAT  
TROUBLES YOU? MAKE  
ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR THE WEDDING AND  
LEAVE THE REST TO  
ME. I'LL RETURN IN  
A WEEK.

THE SWAN FLEW AWAY  
INTO THE SKY...

... AND REACHED THE  
KINGDOM OF KUNDANPUR.





ENTERING THE ROYAL GARDEN,  
IT BEGAN CHANTING NALA'S NAME.  
DAMAYANTI LOOKED UP.



AH!  
WHAT A  
DEAR SWAN!  
IF ONLY  
I COULD  
HAVE IT!

AS DAMAYANTI WENT FORWARD TO  
CATCH THE SWAN, IT MOVED  
FARTHER AWAY.



AT LAST, WITH A SWIFT  
MOVEMENT, SHE CAUGHT IT.



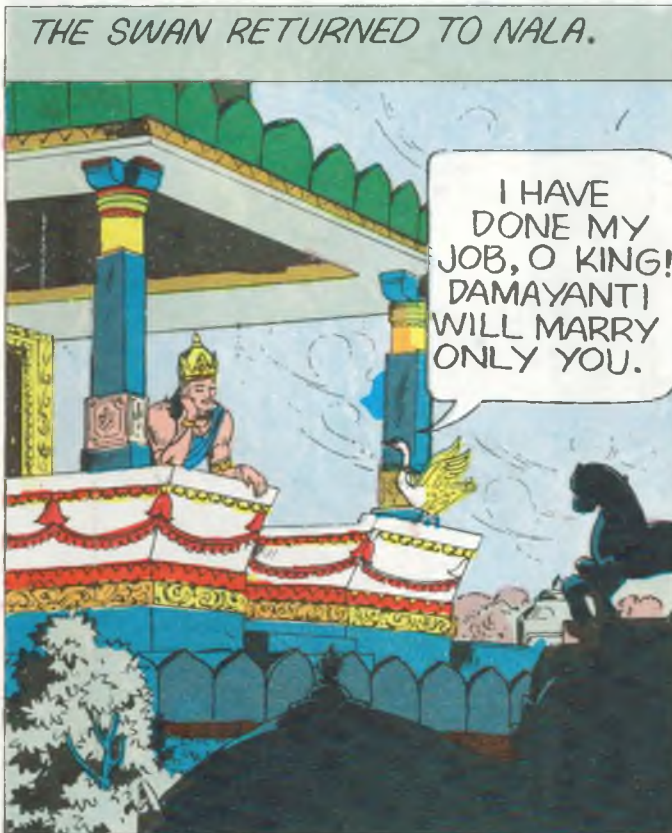


YOU'VE BEEN  
REPEATING  
THE NAME  
'NALA.'  
WHO IS HE?



THE SWAN SPOKE OF NALA  
AND PRAISED HIM HIGHLY.

KING NALA MUST BE A  
WONDERFUL MAN! I'LL MARRY  
HIM AND NONE OTHER.



THE SWAN RETURNED TO NALA.

I HAVE  
DONE MY  
JOB, O KING!  
DAMAYANTI  
WILL MARRY  
ONLY YOU.



I HAVE  
KEPT MY  
PROMISE.  
LET ME  
NOW GO  
BACK TO  
MY COM-  
PANIONS.

I WILL MISS  
YOU, MY  
FRIEND, BUT  
I DON'T WANT  
TO KEEP YOU  
AWAY FROM  
YOUR  
FRIENDS.



NALA WAS SOON INVITED TO  
DAMAYANTI'S SWAYAMVARA.



PRINCES FROM FAR AND NEAR HAD GATHERED IN THE SWAYAM-  
VARA HALL. DAMAYANTI ENTERED WITH THE GARLAND.  
THE PRINCES WERE RESTLESS. LITTLE DID THEY KNOW THAT  
DAMAYANTI'S GARLAND WAS MEANT ONLY FOR NALA.



DAMAYANTI GARLANDED NALA.



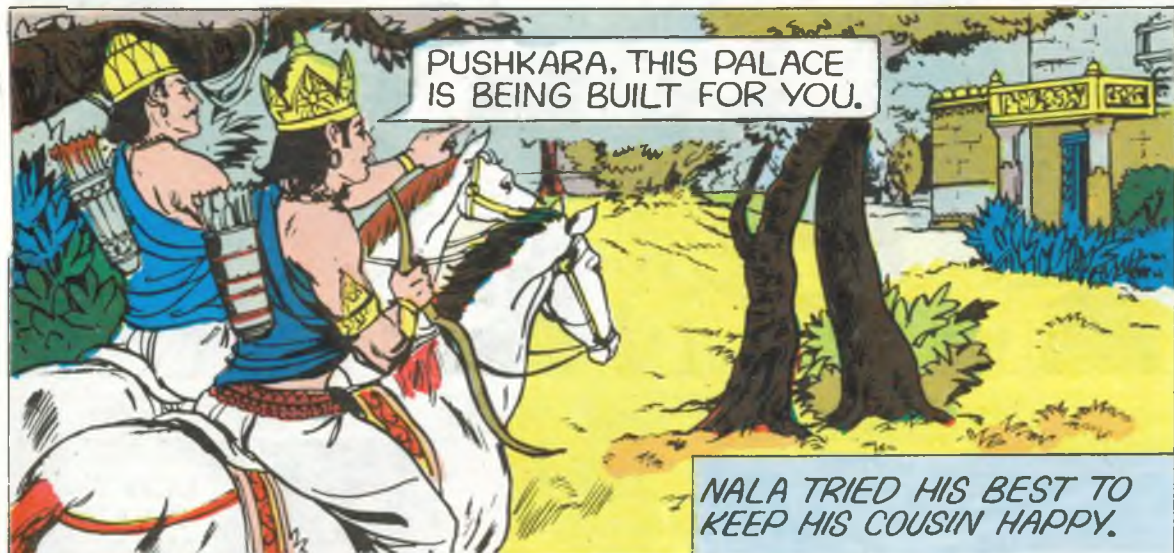
NALA BROUGHT DAMAYANTI TO HIS PALACE. PEOPLE, YOUNG AND OLD, DANCED WITH JOY.



HAPPY TIMES PASS QUICKLY. SOON, TWELVE YEARS WERE OVER. ONE DAY—









*BUT NALA KEPT ON LOSING.*

NOW FOR THE LAST  
ROUND. THE WINNER  
GETS THE CROWN AND  
THE LOSER SPENDS  
THREE YEARS IN THE  
FOREST -  
AGREED?

AGREED!



*THE DICE WERE CAST.*

(I HAVE WON! HA...  
HA...HA...!  
I'M THE  
RULER  
NOW!)



*NALA GAVE UP THE KINGDOM. DAMAYANTI SENT THE CHILDREN TO  
HER PARENTS AND WENT  
AWAY WITH NALA.*





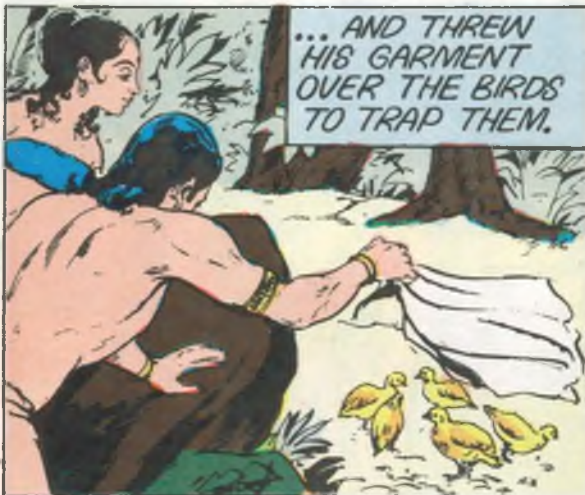
THEY WANDERED IN THE FOREST  
WITHOUT FOOD AND WATER.



ONE DAY NALA  
NOTICED A  
FLOCK OF  
GOLDEN BIRDS...



... AND THREW  
HIS GARMENT  
OVER THE BIRDS  
TO TRAP THEM.



AS HE LEANED FORWARD, THE  
BIRDS FLEW AWAY WITH THE  
GARMENT— NALA'S ONLY  
BELONGING!







DON'T WORRY  
MY KING.  
WE CAN'T  
FIGHT  
FATE!

I'M WORRIED  
ABOUT YOU.  
WHY SHOULD  
YOU SUFFER  
FOR MY SAKE?



NALA GREW SAD.

LISTEN, THIS  
IS THE WAY TO  
YOUR FATHER'S  
KINGDOM.  
YOU  
SHOULD...



OH, NO!  
I WILL  
NOT LEAVE  
YOU  
HERE  
ALONE.



AT NIGHT THEY SLEPT ON THE BARE GROUND COVERED BY DAMAYANTI'S SARI.



EARLY NEXT MORNING, WHEN NALA WOKE UP, HE TORE A PIECE FROM DAMAYANTI'S SARI. WRAPPING HIMSELF IN IT, HE QUIETLY WALKED AWAY.





HE WALKED FOR A LONG TIME.  
SUDDENLY—



OH, HERE  
IS THE  
SERPENT  
GOD.

NALA JUMPED INTO THE FIRE.

A LITTLE LATER—



YOU'VE SAVED  
MY LIFE. I SHALL  
GIVE YOU  
SOMETHING  
IN RETURN.



WALK  
TEN STEPS.



NALA WALKED TEN STEPS AND...

OH!  
SERPENT  
GOD, WHAT  
HAVE YOU  
DONE?

I CHANGED YOUR  
FORM SO THAT  
YOU WON'T BE  
RECOGNISED.  
YOU'RE BAAHUK  
FROM TODAY.



KING RITUPARNA OF  
AYODHYA IS VERY  
GOOD AT THE  
GAME OF DICE.  
GO TO HIM IF  
YOU WISH TO  
KNOW THE  
SECRET OF  
THE GAME!



AND, PUT ON  
THIS MAGIC  
DRESS WHEN  
YOU WANT  
TO BECOME  
YOUR OLD SELF.





MEANWHILE DAMAYANTI WOKE UP.



WHERE HAS  
NALA GONE?  
WHY HAS HE  
LEFT ME ALONE  
IN THE FOREST?



NALA! OH, NALA!

DAMAYANTI ASKED THE ANIMALS  
AND BIRDS.

DAMAYANTI WANDERED IN  
THE FOREST CRYING FOR NALA.



O JUMPING  
DEER!  
O LITTLE  
SPARROW!  
HAVE YOU  
SEEN MY  
NALA?

A DEADLY PYTHON SAW DAMA-  
YANTI AND OPENED ITS JAWS.



IT CAUGHT DAMAYANTI'S LEG.



SUDDENLY A HUNTER'S ARROW HIT AND KILLED THE PYTHON.

THEN -



WHO ARE YOU?  
A GODDESS?  
A HEAVENLY  
DAMSEL?  
MARRY ME!



OH, MY MISFORTUNE!  
I WISH THE PYTHON  
HAD KILLED ME...!  
STAY WHERE YOU  
ARE, IF YOU TAKE  
ONE STEP FURTHER,  
YOU WILL BE BURNT.



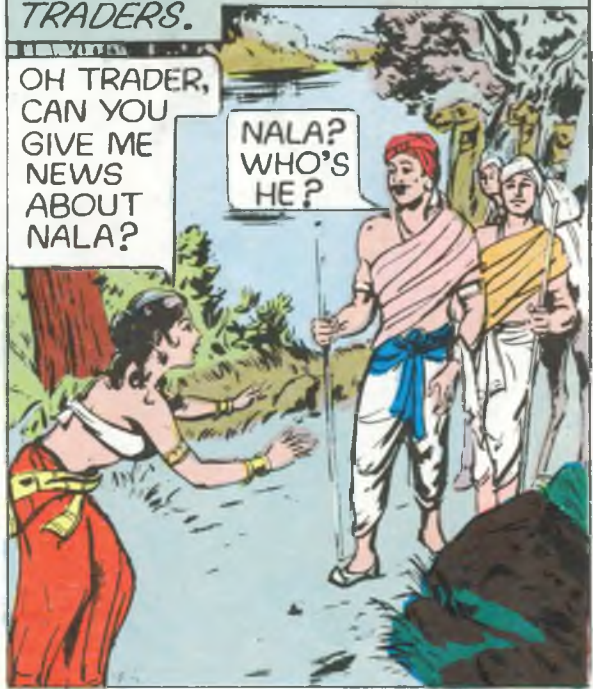


BY HER CURSE, THE HUNTER WAS BURN'T TO ASHES.

STUMBLING AND FALLING, DAMA-YANTI REACHED THE RIVER BANK. THERE SHE MET A GROUP OF TRADERS.

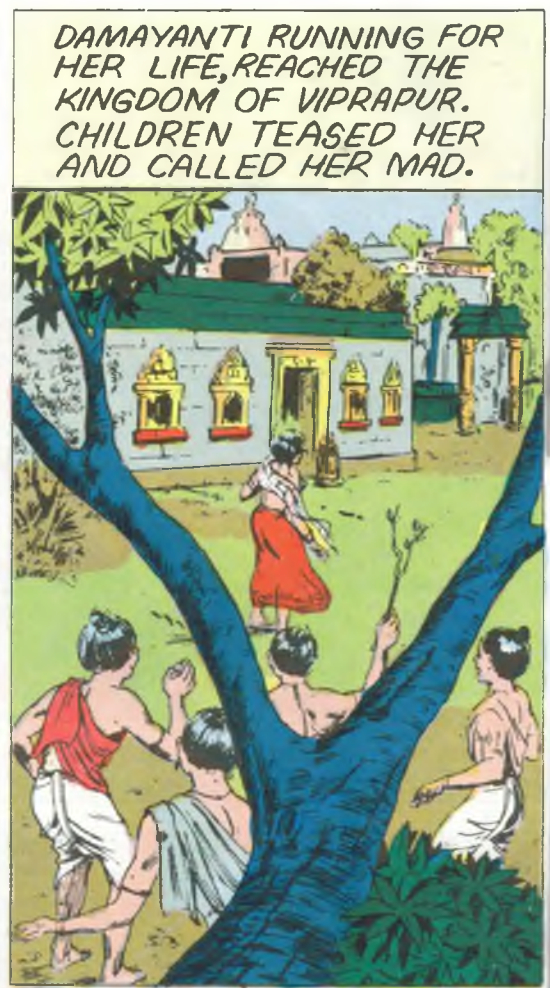
OH TRADER, CAN YOU GIVE ME NEWS ABOUT NALA?

NALA? WHO'S HE?



AT NIGHT WHEN THE TRADERS WERE ASLEEP, A HERD OF ELEPHANTS CAME THAT WAY AND DESTROYED ALL THAT THEY CARRIED.







ONE DAY, THE MINISTER OF KUNDANPUR CAME TO VIPRAPUR.



HOW DID YOU COME HERE?

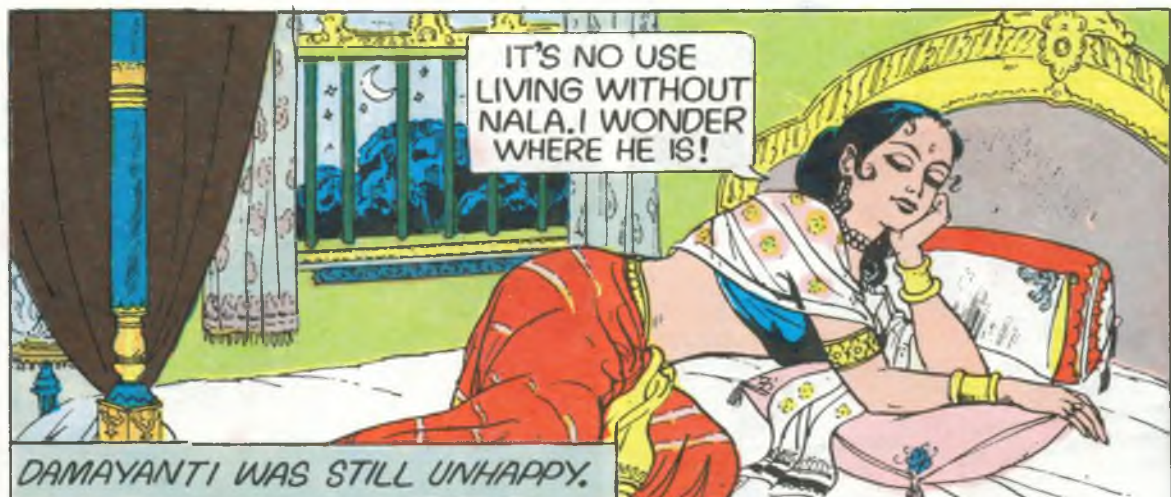
I'VE BEEN SEARCHING A LONG TIME FOR YOU. I'LL TAKE YOU TO KUNDANPUR.



DAMAYANTI CAME TO KUNDANPUR. HER CHILDREN HAD GROWN UP. SHE WATCHED THEM AT PLAY AND MISSED NALA.



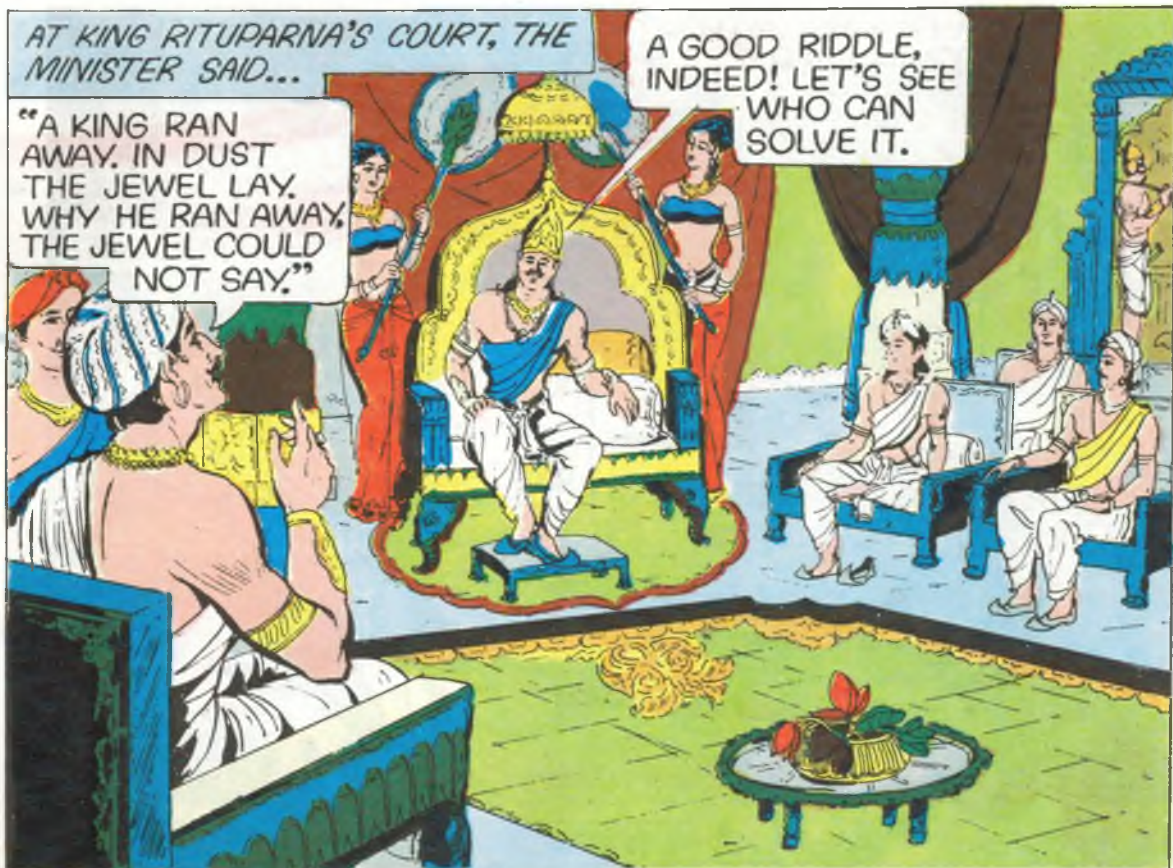




ONE DAY, THE KING'S MINISTER SET OUT IN SEARCH OF NALA.  
SOON HE CAME TO AYODHYA.







AT KING RITUPARNA'S COURT, THE MINISTER SAID...

"A KING RAN AWAY. IN DUST THE JEWEL LAY. WHY HE RAN AWAY, THE JEWEL COULD NOT SAY."

A GOOD RIDDLE, INDEED! LET'S SEE WHO CAN SOLVE IT.



THE RIDDLE HAS GOT TO BE SOLVED!

EVERYONE WONDERED AT THE STRANGE WORDS OF THE MINISTER.

SUDDENLY—

MY LORD! PERMIT ME...



IT WAS NONE OTHER THAN NALA, WHO HAD ASSUMED THE NAME OF BAAHUK.



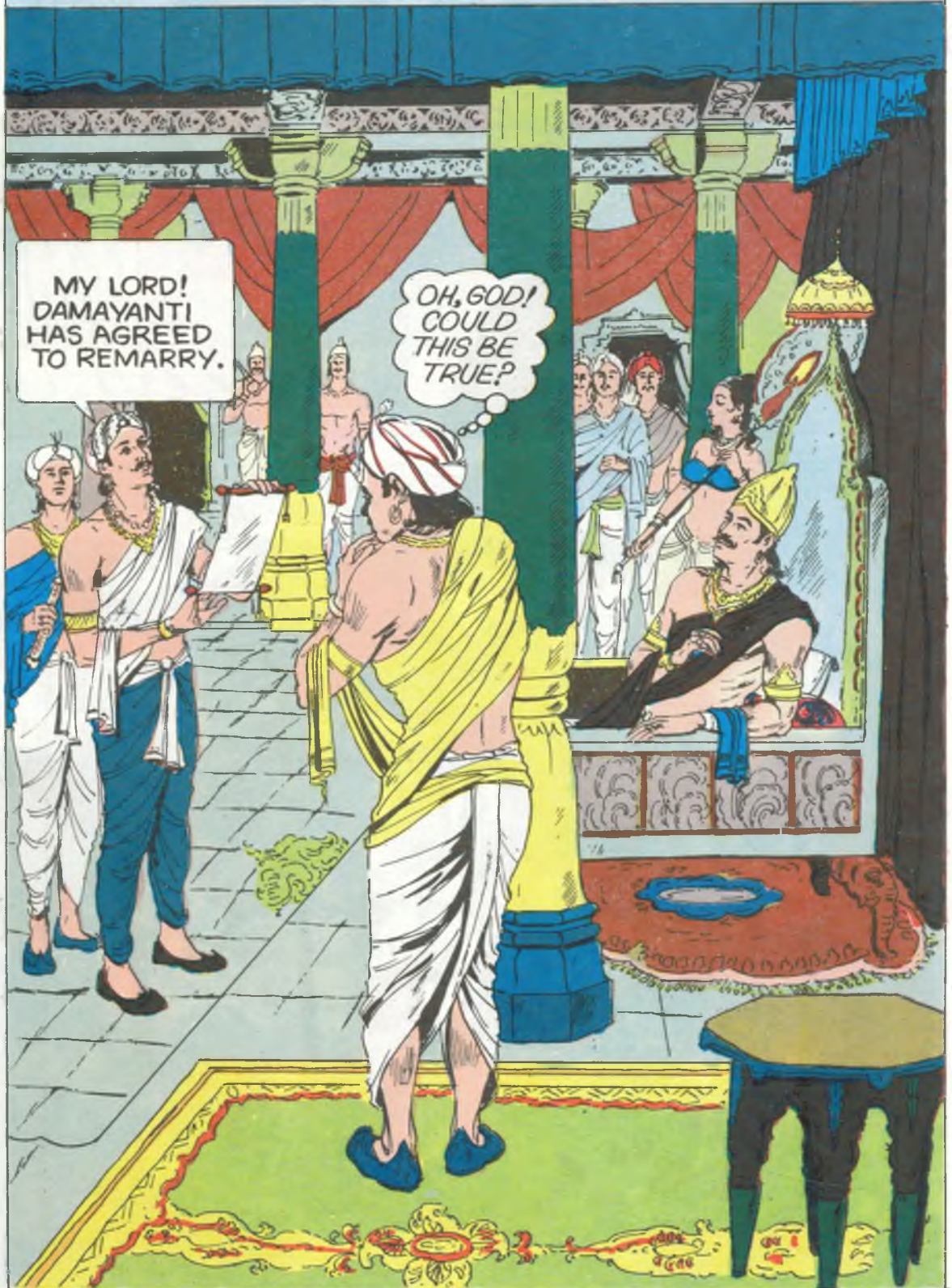


THE MINISTER RETURNED TO KUNDANPUR AND NARRATED THE EVENTS TO DAMAYANTI.





THE MINISTER AGAIN WENT TO AYODHYA.







AND SURELY ENOUGH, THE HORSES SEEMED TO FLY IN THE AIR. NALA WAS A GREAT CHARIOTEER.





BAAHUK, TEACH ME  
THE SECRET OF  
DRIVING HORSES SO  
FAST AND I'LL SHOW  
YOU MY TRICKS IN  
THE GAME OF DICE.

CERTAINLY,  
MY LORD!



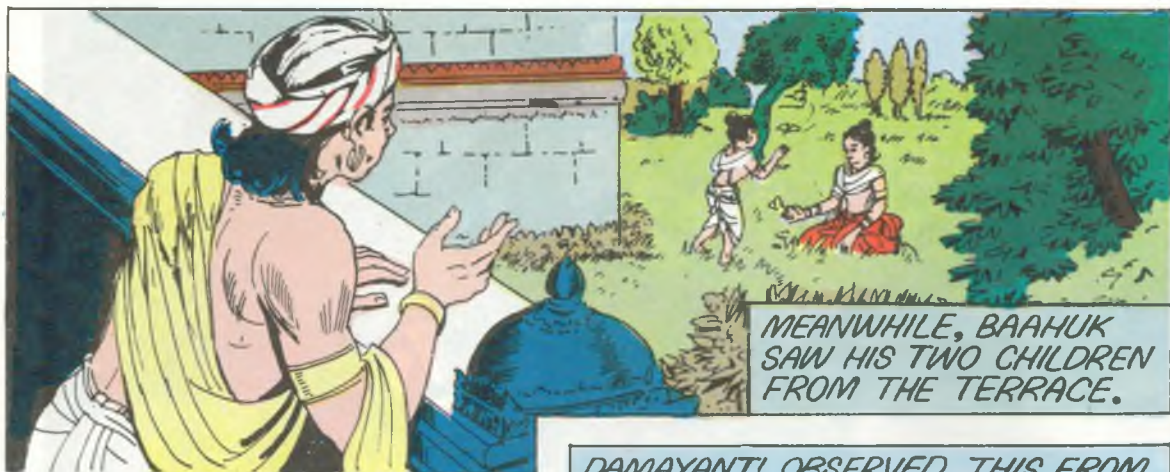
BY THE TIME THEY REACHED KUNDANPUR, THEY HAD  
EXCHANGED THEIR SECRETS.



NO BRIDE AND NO  
SWAYAMVARA! IS  
THE SWAYAMVARA  
ARRANGED IN A  
DIFFERENT CITY?

OH, NO!  
THERE  
ARE NO FESTIVITIES  
BECAUSE IT IS THE  
SECOND SWAYAMVARA!





MEANWHILE, BAAHUK SAW HIS TWO CHILDREN FROM THE TERRACE.



HE RAN UP TO THEM AND HUGGED THEM.

DAMAYANTI OBSERVED THIS FROM THE PALACE. SHE CAME RUNNING TO MEET HIM.

I'M SURE YOU ARE NALA! HOW CAN I THANK YOU FOR COMING!



BUT WERE YOU GOING TO MARRY AGAIN, DAMAYANTI?

NO. IT WAS A TRICK TO GET YOU HERE. WHO ELSE BUT YOU COULD TRAVEL SUCH A LONG DISTANCE IN ONE DAY?



NALA PUT ON THE  
MAGIC DRESS AND-



SEEING NALA SAFE AND SOUND, THE  
PEOPLE WENT CRAZY WITH JOY.

NALA RETURNED TO HIS PALACE WITH DAMAYANTI AND THE CHILDREN.





PUSHKARA! I HAVE  
SPENT MY THREE  
YEARS IN  
THE FOREST.  
COME, LET'S  
HAVE AN-  
OTHER GAME  
OF DICE.

VERY WELL!  
THE WINNER  
WILL HAVE  
THE KINGDOM  
AND THE  
LOSER WILL  
GO TO THE  
FOREST.

THEY SETTLED DOWN TO THE GAME.  
NALA HAD MASTERED THE GAME OF  
DICE WITH THE HELP OF KING RITUPAR-  
NA. IT WAS PUSHKARA'S TURN TO LOSE.

AND  
HE  
DID.

PUSHKARA!  
I'VE WON!  
I'VE  
WON!

BUT, I WON'T  
SEND YOU TO  
THE FOREST.  
YOU MAY  
CONTINUE TO  
LIVE HERE!





ONCE AGAIN, NALA WORE THE CROWN. DAMAYANTI WAS HIS QUEEN. THEY LIVED HAPPILY FOR MANY YEARS AND RULED THE COUNTRY WELL.





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The story of Nala and Damayanti has so much romance and pathos in it that it has attracted the attention of writers and poets not only in India, but also in distant lands. It has been translated into Latin by Bopp and into English verse by Dean Milman.

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